

Sclerotherapy Information

Spider Veins, known medically as telangiectasias, are dilated skin capillaries which develop in most individuals as an inherited tendency but are also a part of the aging process. Pregnancy, hormones, mechanical trauma, and long periods of standing or sitting contribute to this problem. While they may be red or blue, most people have both types. Sclerotherapy is a treatment provided by Dr. Hooper and Dr. Jackson that helps reduce telangiectasias.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do you use to treat the vessels?

We use a sclerosing agent of .75% and .5% polidocanol (Asclera®). Your physician will discuss which sclerotherapy is right for you. The sclerotherapy technique consists of instilling a solution into these tiny capillaries using very small needles. The solution irritates the lining of the capillaries, causing them to collapse. They then cease to carry blood. The body slowly replaces the vessels with invisible, harmless scar tissue.

What are the side effects?

Itching, stinging, or pain may occur briefly at the injection sight during injection

Muscle cramps may occur during injection and usually subside in 10-15 minutes.

Hives may result at injection sites and usually resolve in one day.

Bruising. Occasionally, when the vessels are very weak, bruising can result and can last anywhere from 2 weeks to several years. Telangiectasia matting results when tiny new vessels form at sites of injection. This can look like a red 'slapped' area, or like a bruise.

Blisters may occur when a small amount of solution seeps into the skin. They usually heal quickly but occasionally pigmentation can persist indefinitely. This pigmentation can usually be easily treated.

Rarely, a clot may develop at the injection site. These small clots do not cause any internal problems because the veins treated are superficial, not deep in the leg muscles. Removal within 2 weeks of the injection will speed up the healing process.

Swelling is unusual but in rare cases can be severe. It is particularly common when patients have jobs that require standing for long periods of time, which causes vessels in the ankles and lower legs to be involved. The swelling is not dangerous, but occasionally must be treated with elevation and compression dressings.

Superficial thrombophlebitis is an irritation of the vessels closest to the skin. It sometimes must be treated with an anti-inflammatory and bed rest. This probably occurs in less than 1 case per every 1000 cases.

Scarring has been a very rare occurrence but ulceration at an injection site can occur with resulting scarring.

How soon will the vessels disappear?

Usually the vessels disappear over a period of 2 weeks to 2 months. Recurrences can take place over a period of 1 to 5 years. This treatment **DOES NOT** prevent new telangiectasia from developing.

Are there certain kinds of spider veins that can't be treated?

Generally, the larger the vessel, the more difficult it is to eradicate. The blue vessels, which are very small varicose veins, can be treated. These require frequent injections with tiny amounts of solution plus compression dressings for maximum effect.

Are there certain vessels that tend to recur more commonly?

Yes. They are the kind of vessels which occur in a mat a slapped cheek appearance; very fine radiating vessels. These vessels may require a laser for clearance.

Is there any way to prevent them?

Some authorities feel the use of the support hose is helpful but does not prevent them entirely. Reducing your weight also seems to help. Exercise may also help, but there is some evidence that long distance running may accentuate the development in susceptible individuals, especially around the feet and ankles.

How much do the treatments cost?

The cost is related to the amount of time spent treating the area. It varies greatly from treating a few to treating a large area. The longer the session the greater the cost. We charge \$250 to \$600 per session. Sclerotherapy is generally considered a cosmetic procedure, and is **NOT** covered by insurance.

Are there any special instructions after the procedure?

The pressure wrap should be worn overnight with the support hose overtop. Strenuous physical activity or prolonged periods of standing should be avoided for the first 24 hours, but walking is encouraged. Support hose should be worn immediately following the treatment and 3-7 days at all times in waking hours.

How often can I be treated?

We prefer to inject the same area after a few weeks of healing. Different sites can be injected every week.

How many treatments will I need?

This varies with the number of areas that have to be injected as well as the response to each injection. Optimal results usually require two to four treatment sessions. The goal is to produce a 70-80% improvement overall. Although some people achieve almost complete resolution, 100% clearing does not occur after just one treatment, and may not occur even after several treatments. There is no guarantee that your spider veins will improve or disappear. Also, sclerotherapy treatments do not turn off your genetic tendency to continue to grow new blood vessels over the years, so maintenance treatments are usually necessary as new vessels develop.